

From: David Rahrer
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 6:25pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern:

It would be difficult in the time I have available to describe the transparent and political nature this case has taken. I will, however, do my best to summarize some of my thoughts for the record, as I believe I represent the majority of working America who simply don't have the time to make their opinions formally known. It is these people who some parties continue to claim have been so desparately harmed by Microsoft. I don't think this is so.

It is clear that MS was extremely aggressive and, in some instances, outside the law in its pursuit of the browser market. In the media at the time were boastings by Netscape that they would destroy windows, creating their own desktop environment. They were quite serious and I think MS realized that. I would also like you to recognize that NS browsers were freely downloadable at the time and find it hard to believe that sales to average consumers were a significant source of revenue. It was the corporate sales that drove their engine so please keep in perspective that the majority of consumers were not paying for the endless revisions of the NS Browser, they simply downloaded and installed it.

When MS came out with IE, it was not very good and most people continued using NS, even though IE came with Windows 95. What difference does it make which "comes with" the OS. Do the complaintants believe the public is so stupid that they just take what is put before them? It was because IE became so much better than NS that NS failed. They had geared themselves toward owning the market - their own "monopoly" - and then beyond to the desktop. It didn't happen, in large part because MS created a much better browser and, forseeing that the Internet would be an extension of the desktop environment, included it as standard equipment with Windows. To this day one can install any browser one chooses - even pay for Opera. Or, one has the choice of using what comes with the Windows OS. Those 12% of users who purchase Apple systems, also have a built-in browser but can install any they like.

For those of us that have been using computers for a long time, it is quite obvious that MS has done the unimaginable - converted a world of fragmented systems and hardware to the interchangeable, useful, indispensible marvels of today. It had to happen that someone would do this, and I think it is the picture of an American success story that they did. We should not be continually beating on a company that is in reality the crown jewel of American enterprise. What better example can you offer? And all this because it's fashionable to hate the big guy,

and also that some people would rather blame their own business model failures on MS instead of finding ways to innovate.

To be perfectly blunt, as a middleclass, average American, I have been quite disgusted during most of this process. MS doesn't produce tobacco, they aren't the enemy. They deserve to be fined and put on notice about the laws they did in fact violate - not to have a state by state feeding frenzy on the most viable corporation in our country - all fueled by none other than... Competitors. It's not moral, should not be legal and the rest of the world is laughing the hideous way we have allowed it to happen.

It is unfortunate, but I believe much of the correspondence you receive will be from those with an axe to grind or who followed the directions on a form letter with hopes of collecting an offered prize. You probably won't hear from the majority, those who are simply working and enjoying the bright, boundless world open to them through the Internet and their computer. Not only would they not be enjoying this as easily or as cheaply if MS had not been successful, but they might not be enjoying it at all. These are the people who are collectively thrown around in discussions by politicians and sour CEO's hoping to score points or money by attacking MS while it's fashionable.

I implore you to settle this trial as swiftly and as close to the current framework as possible. It has run on far too long as it is and we have far, far, more important things to work on. Thank you for your time.

David Rahrer